

told me i'd ran a stop sign and i better sit
in the police car while he
wrote the ticket.
he wrote it out for the stop sign while
i sat holdin' my very alcoholic breath.
told me how pleasant it was to
give a man a ticket without any backtalk from him
and i'm still nodding and holding my breath.
i made it tho. he told me goodnight and i
opened the door and exhaled.
damn fine party.

-- jim o'neil

Fairbanks, Alaska

The Red Book

Last year, I wrote to the papers
urging police action in Rhodesia:
they said "Your letter's too long;
we're sorry we can't print it."

Last spring, I touched in a lecture
on education as part of the class-structure:
they said "Do be careful;
you might miss that Senior Lectureship."

Last summer, I stopped taking Encounter,
because of the C.I.A. affair,
and because they only sent me rejection slips.
They said "You're throwing your career away."

Last week, I bought a little book, for
noting down my L.P. records.
It had a red cover ...
M.I.5 have been holding me for seven hours now.

Stalin

The night you died, I was at the opera.
A young woman, whom I did not know, said
'Poor Stalin -- I wonder if he's dead yet?'
At that time, I did not find it strange that she
should pity you.